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ABSTRACT

This paper describes activities of Morehead State University (Kentucky) to support public schools in adjusting to state-mandated educational reforms in curriculum, instruction, assessment, support for children and their families, shared decision-making, and paradigm shifts from Skinnerian behaviorism concepts to social constructivism. Activities included: (1) assessing needs of educators; (2) providing a workshop on outcome-based education in response to identified needs; (3) providing training on performance-based assessment; (4) providing training on the Curriculum Transformations Document; (5) workshops on writing and scoring open response items to help students be successful with the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System; and (6) rewriting of preservice syllabi to include reform precepts, such as manipulative math, hands on science, and writing as a process. Results of an attitudinal survey of Morehead student teachers in the spring of 1994 found that respondents wish to include parents and students in decisions about school programs, but professionals should have a greater voice, and respondents believe that all students can learn, and most at high levels. This optimism may be the most predictive indicator of these student teachers being successful teachers in effective schools. Part of that optimism is viewed as the result of influence and opportunity for female leadership at Morehead, school districts, and Kentucky's department of education. Three tables contain survey information. (JDD)

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ED 379 212

Renewal That Fits:

Preparing Educators for Reforming Schools

In 1990, Kentucky passed the most comprehensive educational reform package in its history. Perhaps the most comprehensive in the United States up to this time. The universities have the challenging role of being asked to help public schools adjust to these changes in curriculum, instruction, assessment, support for children and their families, shared decision-making and paradigm shifts from Skinnerian behaviorism concepts to social constructivism. At the same time, we are being asked to model these precepts well in our own classes while we are going through the same kinds of changes.

The following activities by the Clearinghouse for School Services and the organizations with which this office was interacting will give you some understanding of the magnitude of reforming state education programs from preschool to college.

The first activity two years ago was to ask the consortia of Professional Development Coordinators (PDCs) in our service area the kind of inservice need they had. Their overwhelming concern was with outcome-based education (OBE) and the alignment of curriculum with assessment. A needs assessment of our MSU faculty showed similar concerns. They too were interested in knowing more about curriculum and assessment and OBE.

Therefore, on campus, a study group was formed by those faculty who were willing to devote their time to a study of OBE. They were provided with materials and tapes to further their study and several members were able to attend OBE workshops by Dr. Bill Spady and Dr. Linda Edwards. A member of the Spady Network, Dr. Lloyd Roettger, was invited to campus for a two-day workshop on OBE. The workshop was also open to the

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PDCs in the area at no cost to them. The attendance was low--about 20 participated and five of them were public school administrators.

The Kentucky Department of Education offered a one-day workshop for higher education at the capital on performance based assessment. MSU had over 35 faculty who participated--the largest group of all the higher education institutions.

Several of MSU faculty ventured into the public schools this first year to articulate awareness level information on portfolios and other forms of performance based assessment. But most of the faculty knowledgeable about traditional assessments of students and evaluation of programs were unwilling to give these awareness level workshops. This task fell to education and English faculty who had read and attempted some of these activities in their classes.

The state department offered training for volunteers to present the Curriculum Transformations Document to public schools. MSU had many volunteers for this training but only the first seven were accepted. The document consists of two volumes of over 200 pages. One volume lists outcomes, demonstrators, assessments and activities. The second volume suggests readings and resources to implement volume I. I saw the document presented seven times and each time the participants were overwhelmed by the volume of information and somewhat resistant. In an atmosphere which was exhorting that "less is more", this document was not an example of "less"..

Nevertheless, this group of trainers over the months that followed were asked to go out and present this document many times. Schools were asked to begin their drafts of their new curricula within the year. Many, however, would begin with just one area such as

writing since the assessments were to be based heavily on portfolios and responses to open response items. The teachers were concerned that these assessments required content on which the state had not given any guidelines. Those guidelines will be completed this fall. A year after the Transformations document was released and two years past the change in assessments. Yet content has been a concern of teachers since the beginning.

The most frequent request now is for assistance in helping inservice teachers understand ways to write and score open response items to help their students be successful with the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS) Tests. The CSS has sponsored several workshops and disseminated information about open-response items. The faculty is still hesitant to do this service. Therefore, a training session on campus is planned to have the state department and the KIRIS test designers to help our faculty understand the process. School practitioners will also be invited to give their perspectives on these assessments.

For the preservice teacher education responsibilities the university has responded to KERA in several ways. Over 105 syllabi have been rewritten to include KERA precepts. Workshops which bear credit on Primary Schools, Writing as a Process and Curriculum Transformation have been offered. Projects which train teachers and are available to preservice teachers include manipulative math, hands on science, writing-as-a-process, critical thinking, principal institutes, and a conference on diversity.

In the spring of 1993 the New Teacher Outcomes were released to the colleges of education. In the spring of 1994 the Experienced Teacher Standards and the New

Administrator Standards were released. Colleges must respond to these new standards by 1996 in a very substantive way.

Yet since the 1990 reform the faculty has been educating new teachers. How is this working? Let's look at the attitudinal results of a recent survey of MSU student teachers in the spring of 1994 (see table 1).

In sharing decision making with students, note item 2on table 2--77% of the student teachers (ST) agree or strongly agree that students make good choices about their academic development.

This is echoed in item 6. 75% of ST agree and strongly agree that people are motivated to work when they are given a voice in how that work is to be done.

Again, this belief is seen in item 9 when 89% of ST strongly agree and agree that students learn best when they can engage in work they have chosen.

However, in item 10--58% strongly agree or agree that students need much direction and supervision from their teachers in order to learn--some of the traditional beliefs of control are still present but there is evidence here of a willingness to share that control.

These young teachers also felt a self efficacy in being able to produce good results. In item 1, 165 out of 166 ST agree or strongly agree that teachers make good decisions about school programs.

They also want to participate in the decision-making process in the school. On table 3, in item 11, 80% of the ST strongly disagree or disagree with the statement teachers do not want to make decisions about school programs they are much too busy.

They feel teachers can should make decisions about school programs but they seem willing to share those decisions with parents as well as students. In item 3--65% agree and strongly agree that parents are able to make good decisions about their children's programs. They also see parents and teachers working together. In item 4, 83% strongly agree and agree that teachers and parents will support programs they have helped develop.

They may wish to include parents but the message from this survey indicates they feel that the professionals should have a greater voice. In item 8--64% strongly agree or agree that school personnel are trained professionals who can best decide about a student's program. This is shown again in item 13. 83% agree or strongly agree that parents should support teacher and principal-selected school projects. Like some of the items in the above, they see a need to share control but are unwilling to let go completely of their traditional position of strength.

There is an expectation here that shows a willingness to focus on students achieving--75% of ST in item 5 believe that all students can learn and most at high levels. They are somewhat ambivalent about how to do this in pragmatic terms. In the traditional manner, retention in grade and ability grouping are ways teachers try to achieve that all learn. In item 17, 60% strongly agree or agree that the decision to retain a student in grade may have a long-term negative effect on that student's self esteem. In item 16--46% believe that a decision to retain a student in grade may have a long-term positive effect on that student's self-esteem. But in item 14, ability grouping is agreed upon by 73% of the ST as a viable method of operation. Clearly, our population of students are in transition in some of the basic beliefs of KERA.

In another study of this same group of students teachers of students perceptions of knowledge about KERA (table 2) there are these interesting pieces. In item 26, only 56% of the students felt prepared in their understanding of KERA.

Yet in KERA knowledge and use of the university and school based resource teacher about 84% of the student teachers felt these persons were well qualified. Perhaps the ST confidence in being able to judge this was enhanced by the fact that the items were specifically mentioned in this part of the instrument. There is, however, a real need indicated here for these student teachers to experience portfolios in their training. Only 61% had the portfolio as part of their assessment.

These are some indications of success. Perhaps one of the best indicators of success with these ST is their 75% agreement rate that all children can learn and most at high levels. In the Kentucky Institute for Educational Research survey of 400 teachers and 100 school administrators and counselors, only 35% of that population could agree with that statement--most were still undecided (presentation by Roger Pankratz on September 2, 1994). The Pritchard Committee in 1991 found similar answers when they did a study of the citizens of Kentucky. Somehow in our Eastern Kentucky community we are fostering an optimism that is not shared by many citizens of Kentucky. With the research done on expectations of students through Pygmalion in the Classroom--Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobs (1968), Sam Kermin (1980), Edmonds (1979), Brookover (1979), Ruetter, Goodlad (1982) and Stedman (1987) this optimism may be the most predictive indicator of these student teachers being successful teachers in effective schools.

This same optimism was seen in the need assessment most recently given to MSU faculty (see table 3). They are willing to collaborate with each other. They are willing to go across departments and disciplines. They are willing to submit themselves to performance assessment with a colleague. The n of this survey is small, but this indicator plus the faculty's past history of involvement are indicators that something is happening with reform on the MSU campus.

Perhaps a part of that energy and optimism is the result of influence and opportunity for leadership of women.

At MSU, there has recently been added a woman chairperson of the Department of Elementary, Reading and Special Education. Since 1990, three of the four program coordinators for this department are women. The Department of Leadership and Secondary Education has grown from one woman in the department to four. The public schools' district professional development coordinators are 55% women. Within the school site, these coordinators for staff development are 80% women.

In the public schools in the MSU area, we have gone from zero women superintendents in 36 districts to four women superintendents and one assistant superintendent. Women are being given more principalships. The most consistent member of the Kentucky Department of Education staff who is second in command is a woman.

The important aspects being trumpeted by the leaders of reform in Kentucky are cooperation, supportive networks, communication, longitudinal concerns about evaluation and production, holistic language, risk-taking, math and science in context. All of these

components according to research have been tied to female interests, ways of knowing and talents.

Nurturing ideas, change and growth is a disposition culture and biology has given women to make them fit for reform.

Table 1

KERA Attitudes

Agree/Strongly Agree

Question	Percentage									
	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
1. Teachers can make good decisions about school programs. (99%)										
2. Students can make good choices about their academic development. (77%)										
3. Parents are able to make good decisions about their children's school programs. (65%)										
4. Teachers and parents will support programs they have helped develop. (83%)										
5. All students can learn and most at high levels. (75%)										
6. People are motivated to work when they are given a voice in how that work is to be done. (75%)										
7. People need to be closely watched and supervised in order to work effectively. (35%)										
8. School personnel are trained professionals who can best decide about a student's program. (64%)										
9. Students learn best in an environment when they can engage in work they have chosen. (89%)										
10. Students need much direction and supervision from their teachers in order to learn. (58%)										
11. Teachers do not want to make decisions about school programs, they are much too busy. (11%)										
12. Principals' first duties are to discipline students, keep order and see that the building is clean and orderly. (30%)										
13. Parents should support teacher-and principal-selected school projects. (83%)										
14. Students should be placed in classes which fit their level of ability. (73%)										
15. The principal should be an instructional leader as well as a fiscal and plant manager. (87%)										
16. The decision to retain a student in grade may have a long-term positive effect on that student's self-esteem. (50%))										
17. The decision to retain a student in grade may have a long-term negative effect on that student's self-esteem. (60%)										

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Data gathered by Marium Williams and Sue Vencill
Clearinghouse for School Services
Morehead State University

Table 2
Perceptions of Program

Questions	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
Student Teachers' (ST) Perceptions of Their Own Preparation										
ST feels prepared to teach students from different cultural backgrounds. (64%)										
ST feels prepared in knowledge about reform. (56%)										
Student Teachers' Perceptions of Cooperating Teachers (CT)										
ST feels cooperating CT produces, implements, and manages instruction that addresses learning goals and standards. (74%)										
ST feels CT challenges ST to be reflective and plan appropriate practices. (86%)										
ST feels CT provides opportunities each day for performance assessment and reflection. (83%)										
ST feels cooperating teacher creates a learning environment that supports creativity. (82%										
ST feels CT allows the ST to be a team member, identifying situations where collaboration is important. (84%)										
ST feels CT acquaints ST with materials and encourages creative and appropriate use of technology. (81%)										
ST feels CT allows the ST to integrate learning across disciplines. (84%)										
ST feels CT allows for creative use of technology in classroom instruction. (83%)										
ST feels CT provides opportunities for student teachers to assess students and evaluate effects of teaching. (88%)										
ST feels CT demonstrates a sensitivity to multicultural differences. (79%)										
ST feels CT proposes learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate. (88%)										
Student Teacher Perceptions of University Supervisors (US)										
ST feels the US encourages professional growth activities. (87%)										
ST feels that the US observes various classes and/or teaching situations for assessment. (90%)										
ST feels the US is knowledgeable about KERA. (85%)										
ST feels the US used multiple assessments and data for evaluations. (84%)										
ST feels US focused the seminar on KERA goals and best practices. (82%)										
ST feels US required learner outcomes to be identified for use in lesson plans. (70%)										
US made the portfolio a part of assessment. (61%)										
US required a portfolio be completed. (70%)										
US models interpersonal and team member skills in collaborating with CT and ST. (88%)										

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Data gathered by Shirley Blair and Lena Adkins
Office of Student Teaching
Morehead State University

Table 3
April 28, 1994
MSU Faculty Orientation to Collaboration and Change

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree
1. The New Teacher (NTOs) will affect the content of what I teach.	56%	28%
2. The NTOs will necessitate across department collaboration.	53%	29%
3. The NTOs will necessitate across campus collaboration.	50%	28%
4. The NTOs will affect the methods I use when I teach.	86%	12½%
5. I would like to discuss with others who teach preservice teachers across the campus.	56%	19%
6. I would like to work with another colleague in transforming to NTOs.	38%	31%
7. I would be willing to team teach with another, perhaps in another department.	44%	16%
8. I would be willing to observe in a colleague's class to give feedback on mutually determined objectives.	71%	22%
9. I would like to include in our conversation public school teachers.	59%	29%
10. I believe more frequent contact with public schools would improve NTOs effects.	53%	18%
11. I would be willing to be observed by a colleague to receive feedback on mutually determined objectives.	53%	35%
12. I would like to work in conversation circles with colleagues to discuss problems which may arise during change.	41%	30%

n=18

Data gathered by Marium Williams
Clearinghouse for School Services
Tim Miller and Karen Spradling
KY Principal Internship Program/
Office of New Teacher Outcomes
Morehead State University